

A SECURE PLACE IN GLOBAL MARKETS

by Erin Butler

U.S. Commercial Service

“We are addressing a universal problem,” says Rami Lazarescu, Sales and Marketing Director for Ampro Electronics.

Ampro, an Irvine, California, company that manufactures an auto anti-theft system called “The Trap,” has increased its export business to buyers in more than 70 countries since its founding in 1995. Lazarescu explains that his product has a market wherever there are cars. The Trap, which has been endorsed by the Los Angeles police chief, protects not only cars, but their contents as well. Unlike traditional alarms, which rely on “passer-by intervention,” the Trap emits a siren almost as loud as a jet engine inside the car to deter would-be thieves.

Even a company with an exciting, low-cost product and virtually limitless

market potential like Ampro can use some support in jump-starting their international sales. Lazarescu wasted no time in contacting the Los Angeles U.S. Export Assistance Center, which is part of the global network of the U.S. Commercial Service, a Commerce Department agency that provides international business solutions to small and medium-sized U.S. companies. There, Lazarescu met international trade specialist Fernando Sanchez, who worked with him to get Ampro into new markets. Sanchez provided market research and recommended market entry strategies, such as trade shows, product catalogs and customized matchmaking services.

Lazarescu used a variety of tactics to find new international customers. To enter the Italian market, Sanchez suggested a Gold Key Service, in which Commercial Service experts in Italy screened and researched potential

Italian distributors for the Trap, then scheduled appointments for Lazarescu with the top prospects. As a result, Lazarescu appointed a distributor and made an initial sale of \$16,000. The service “proved very, very effective,” says Lazarescu.

When Ampro decided to go to Indonesia, Sanchez recommended an upcoming auto industry trade show there. For the Japanese market, Sanchez worked with his colleagues in the Commercial Service’s Japan offices to find distributors for Lazarescu. Ampro also advertised in the product catalog *Commercial News USA*, a Commercial Service publication that is given free of charge to international buyers. “The Commercial Service Gold Key and Trade Missions helped us export our no-installation (plugs into your stereo) car alarm to more than 70 countries in four years,” says Lazarescu.

Ampro’s success has not gone unnoticed. Last year, President Clinton recognized Ampro for the company’s success in international markets. The company received the President’s E-Award, a prestigious honor given to companies that have demonstrated excellence in exporting. Ampro uses the E-Award seal on their product packaging and Lazarescu reports that this endorsement has helped increase their international sales even further. “We are forever looking for new distributors,” says Lazarescu. And with a great product and the support of Fernando Sanchez and the U.S. Commercial Service, Ampro will continue to find success. ■



Photo courtesy of U.S. Commercial Service

Fernando Sanchez of the Los Angeles Export Assistance Center (left) with E-Award winners Rami Lazarescu (center) and Reuven Barnoy of Ampro Electronics (right).